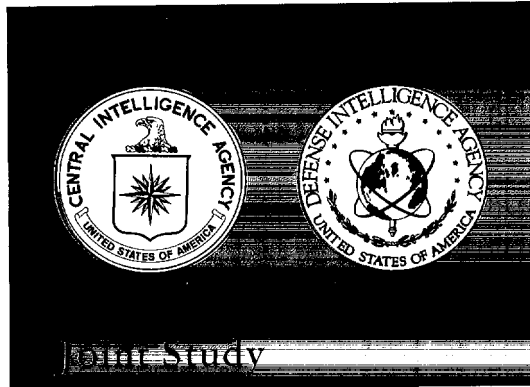


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NSA review completed



Communist Violations of the Vietnam and Laos Settlement Agreements and Related Developments

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3 January 1974

Forty-Fourth Report**COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS OF THE VIETNAM AND LAOS
SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS***

(This report covers the weeks
from 19 December 1973 through 2 January 1974)

The Key Points

- North Vietnamese infiltration increased during the last two weeks with the detection of five new regular groups, 51 special-purpose groups, and two specially designated groups.
- Heavy North Vietnamese supply shipments continued in southern North Vietnam, and a major transportation campaign currently is under way in southern Laos. Supply shipments also were noted for the first time since last spring in northeastern Cambodia.
- The latest photography over North Vietnam provided coverage of the Vinh Yen Armor Training Center where a large number of armored vehicles was seen. Tanks and armored personnel carriers also were observed in the North Vietnamese Panhandle. Other photography revealed that the petroleum pipeline in southern Laos was rapidly nearing the tri-border area.
- Conscription in North Vietnam apparently continues at a low level.
- New COSVN guidelines call for an increase in military activity in South Vietnam during the first several months of 1974, but stop short of calling for a general offensive.

* This report has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

Preface

This report is the forty-fourth in a series summarizing evidence received during the reporting period of (I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military supplies toward and into South Vietnam, (II) Communist-initiated combat activity in violation of the Vietnam and Laos settlement agreements, and (III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina.

DETAILS

I. Infiltration and Redeployments of North Vietnamese Personnel and Military Supplies***Personnel Infiltration and Redeployments***

1. Regular troop infiltration stepped up during the last two weeks with the detection of five new groups entering the system in North Vietnam. The groups contained a total of some 2,500 troops. One group is destined for the western highlands, while the other four are going to the COSVN area of South Vietnam.* In addition, the number of detections of special-purpose groups increased sharply. During the period 19 December 1973 - 2 January 1974, 51 such groups were identified for the first time in the system. Twenty-four of the special-purpose groups, totaling more than 900 persons, were detected starting southward from North Vietnam, while 27 other groups totaling about 650 persons were observed farther south in the infiltration system. Finally, two specially designated groups with some 250 persons also were initially detected heading south during the last two weeks.

2. Since early November, some 7,000 troops have started infiltrating south from North Vietnam en route to the western highlands and the COSVN areas. Some 5,000 of these have now passed or are moving through the Laotian Panhandle. This is far less than the projected number of infiltrators of 11,000 per month which a North Vietnamese intercept of 11 November suggested would pass through southern Laos beginning in December en route to those two areas (see the report for 21 November). As shown in the following table, total troop infiltration since 1 September 1973 is less than 65% of the infiltration during the comparable period last year. The geographic pattern of infiltration has also changed: two-thirds of the total so far this season have gone to southern Laos and contiguous border areas compared with less than 20% last year.

3. Intercepted North Vietnamese communications of late December also indicate the southward movement of at least two armor groups - A21 and A24 -- in the Laotian Panhandle. Both groups have 12 tanks each and are apparently destined for the southern half of South Vietnam. These tanks may be the same ones that were noted moving through in the North Vietnamese Panhandle in early December (see the report for 5 December), although it is possible that they are tanks from armor groups delayed in the Laotian Panhandle last summer.

* One other regular group, previously included in our estimate as a "gap-filled" group destined for the COSVN area, also was detected during the period.

**Comparative Starts of Troops
from North Vietnam, by Destination
1 September - 2 January**

	1972	1973
Total	53,000	33,500
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	16,000	2,000
MR 5	5,000	2,000
B-3 Front	9,000	2,000
COSVN	13,000	5,000
Southern Laos/MR 559	10,000	22,500

4. A new North Vietnamese antiaircraft (AAA) regiment has been identified in southern Laos in an intercepted message of 20 December. The message suggested that the new unit -- the NVA 500th AAA Regiment -- had been in place for only a few weeks. Although the exact area of operation of the new regiment was not specified, it probably will replace the 595th AAA Regiment in Savannakhet Province. The 595th recently shifted southward into Saravane Province, presumably to replace the 232nd AAA Regiment which was scheduled to deploy eastward into northern South Vietnam during December (see the report for 12 December). Map 515529 shows the current distribution of Communist and South Vietnamese combat forces by military region.

Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies

North Vietnam

5. During the past two weeks, the flow of supplies through southern North Vietnam continued at a very high level. In the Vinh area, logistic units were noted receiving and shipping southward several thousand tons of cargo, mostly ordnance, during this period. Typical of the activity over the last two weeks was a 26 December intercept from Binh Tram 8 which indicated that it was preparing to dispatch southward some 28,000 Chinese anti-personnel and anti-tank mines. Farther south, between Quang Khe and the DMZ, COMINT reflected substantial, but smaller, amounts of ordnance being moved by North Vietnamese logistic units. In this area, cargo was moved both by barge and by truck, and, like the shipments in the Vinh area, involved mostly ordnance.

Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

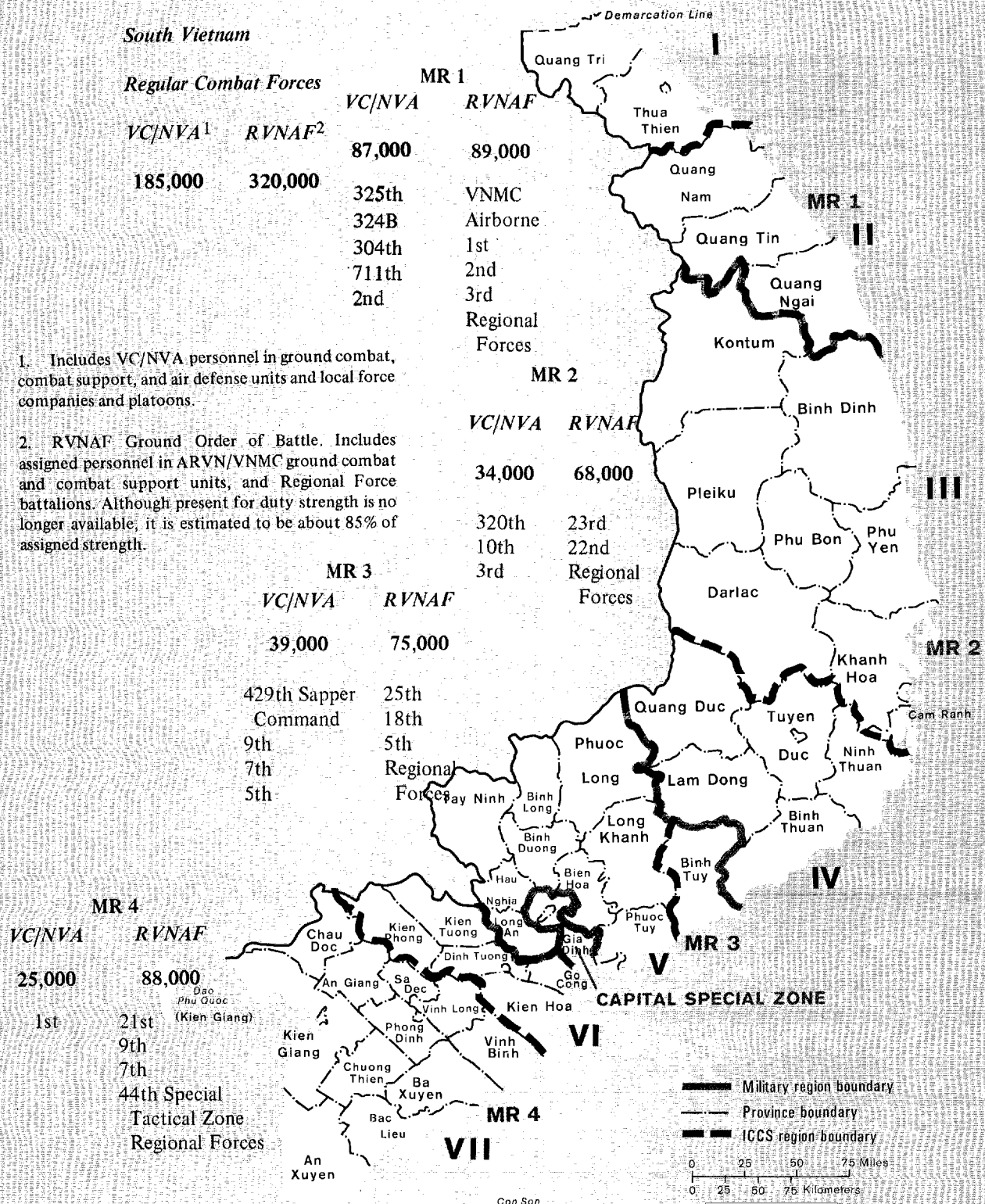
South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

VC/NVA ¹	RVNAF ²
87,000	89,000
325th	VNMC
324B	Airborne
304th	1st
711th	2nd
2nd	3rd
	Regional Forces

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes assigned personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions. Although present for duty strength is no longer available, it is estimated to be about 85% of assigned strength.



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Laos

6. In southern Laos, COMINT indicates that a major transportation effort is under way, involving at least 11 transportation battalions. Cargo is being moved in both the central and far southern parts of the Panhandle and includes rice, other foodstuffs, and weapons. For example, a recent intercept from a unit in the central Panhandle indicated that it had received some 4,000 tons of cargo, including 1,800 tons of ordnance, during the period 7-25 December.

25X1 7. The activity in COMINT was confirmed in photography, when [redacted] aerial reconnaissance of the new dual-lane route in southern Laos showed continued heavy vehicle movement along all portions through the end of the year. The photography indicated that the activity is now more balanced than during December, with northbound movement nearing a par with southbound convoys. Unlike early December coverage, fewer concentrations of 100 or more trucks were seen on the move; instead, more convoys of smaller size were detected spread out over the entire route structure. Field readout of the photography indicated two or three T-54 tanks and some half dozen field and antiaircraft artillery pieces in tow on the main route north of the tri-border on several occasions late in the month, probably reflecting redeployment and buildup of defenses along this new supply corridor.

8. In other related activity, further information was received during the past two weeks indicating that the North Vietnamese plan to use the Mu Gia Pass shortly for the dry season resupply push. Several NVA units which have completed road construction at Ban Karai Pass to the south have been shifted to Mu Gia; a newly identified 67th Engineer Regiment reportedly is now there; a new road is being readied; and MR 559 has directed that the Pass be opened. Mu Gia Pass has not been used as a major entry point for the movement of supplies into Laos in 1973.

Cambodia

9. Some of the cargo transiting Laos may be entering Cambodia. On 23 December a Khmer Communist unit in Stung Treng reported that it had received its "first" shipment of supplies from the North Vietnamese, including 15 vehicles and about 25 tons of ordnance. The message also indicated that possibly as many as 300 vehicles carrying supplies would be received, although the timeframe for these deliveries was not given. These deliveries in northeastern Cambodia are the first noted in COMINT since early last spring, when North Vietnamese logistic units were noted moving supplies.

South Vietnam

10. Despite the heavy supply shipments in North Vietnam and Laos, COMINT indicated little activity in northern South Vietnam other than that related to road repair and local distribution. Photography continues to indicate that many of the major supply corridors through northern MR 1 are incapable of handling heavy vehicle activity because of wash-outs and mud slides caused by the seasonal rains. This pattern of activity is expected to continue for at least the next two months.

II. Communist-Initiated Combat Activity in South Vietnam and Laos

South Vietnam

11. In South Vietnam the total number of Communist-initiated cease-fire violations reported by the South Vietnamese Armed Forces since 27 January 1973, since 15 June 1973, and for the past week (27 December 1973 - 2 January 1974) are shown below:

Military Region	Total Since 27 January Cease-Fire		Total Since 15 June Cease-Fire		Last Week (27 Dec - 2 Jan)	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
Total	4,368	28,979	1,999	15,024	42 (91) ¹	593 (754) ¹
MR 1	1,540	5,641	515	2,282	8	55
MR 2	726	4,767	462	2,913	6	99
MR 3	666	5,089	264	2,513	11	95
MR 4	1,436	13,482	758	7,316	17	344

1. Figures in parentheses denote totals of the previous week.

12. Some of these violations may have been initiated by South Vietnamese forces rather than Communist forces, and it is impossible in all cases to determine the actual instigator. The tabulation above and the charts following the Annex, however, show fairly accurately the trend in the amount of combat that has occurred in South Vietnam since the cease-fire. The fact that a combat incident occurred at a particular time and place is generally reported accurately by the South Vietnamese, even though the question of who started it may not always be treated objectively. However, operational reports since 19 December have attempted to distinguish between Communist and friendly-initiated violations. Only those violations designated as Communist-initiated are reported in the above tabulation.

Laos

13. There was no significant military activity in Laos during the past two weeks.

III. Other Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina

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Photography of North Vietnam

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14. The latest photographic mission over North Vietnam [] found unusually clear skies, providing widespread, fair quality coverage of most major military, industrial, and commercial areas. Clouds, however, did obscure targets in the Panhandle south of Quang Khe.

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15. Coverage of the Dong Dang - P'ing-hsiang rail transshipment area and the port of Haiphong showed generally low to moderate levels of activity, and no direct evidence of recent deliveries of military equipment. Large numbers of cargo trucks and utility vehicles, however, are still being imported through the Dong Dang - P'ing-hsiang entry point. About 275 vehicles were seen near a rail spur at P'ing-hsiang, another 27 trucks were parked heading south on the main road just south of the border checkpoint, and the largest of the four truck parks at Dong Dang appeared to be stocked with more vehicles than it had in mid-November.

16. Twenty miles west of Dong Dang, a SA-3 missile storage area was identified for the first time. Earlier photography [] shows that the site was then in the early stages of construction. The facility is served by Route 1B and consists of a cleared compound with several personnel and service tents. Approximately 25 SA-3 missile canisters, 3 canister transporters, oxidizer tanks, and other unique support equipment were seen in the compound. This facility may be serving as a temporary holding area for SA-3 equipment.

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17. The mission also provided total coverage of the Vinh Yen Armor Training Center northwest of Hanoi. The photography revealed a large increase in armor over the 161 armored vehicles - including 132 tanks - seen there in late September. [] CIA counts 233 armored vehicles - the highest total ever observed at this major armor facility. The apparent increase in inventory [] may be the result of new imports, new arrivals from other areas of the country, or increased activity within the training area itself. The total of 233 includes 145 confirmed tanks, 38 probable or possible tanks, and 50 various types of armored personnel carriers (APCs). Of the 233, 71 tanks and 11 APCs are located in the main tank storage shed area in positions relatively

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unchanged from those observed in partial coverage in Vinh Yen in mid-November. CIA thus believes that the current photography indicates that there has been no significant drawdown in armor stocks at Vinh Yen since September.

18. The DIA count at Vinh Yen is 105 tanks. Sixty-three tanks are located in the storage compound and 42 in the adjacent training area. This is an increase of 34 tanks within the compound since [REDACTED] coverage.

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19. In the North Vietnamese Panhandle, 47 tanks and 17 BTR-60 APCs were observed parked in groups in a cleared area off Route 1A, some seven miles south of the Cong Phu railroad siding in Nghe An Province. Ten to 11 T-54 tanks were sighted at Cong Phu in photography of [REDACTED]. Because this siding is directly linked by road to the site of the 47 tanks and 17 APCs, it is likely that the earlier sighting of tanks at Cong Phu was one of a series of armor groups that were recently offloaded at Cong Phu and driven to the storage area. At least 20 of the tanks and the 17 BTR-60s are new to the storage area [REDACTED]

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***Communist Petroleum Pipeline System in Southern Laos
Nearing the Tri-Border***

20. Photography [REDACTED] indicates the Laotian petroleum pipeline system is rapidly being extended south along the path of the new dual-lane supply corridor into the tri-border area. Field readouts of the photography [REDACTED] indicate about 15 miles of new intermittent clearing of vegetation and pipeline traces south of the last identified terminus, ending within two miles of the Cambodian border (see Map 562332). The new dual-lane road and the petroleum pipeline are expected to be extended into the highlands of South Vietnam and will service the Communists' new in-country Route 14.

New Road Construction Planned in Southern North Vietnam

21. COMINT indicates that logistic units in southern North Vietnam may be preparing to build a major new road from Route 15 in North Vietnam just north of Mu Gia Pass southward along the eastern slope of the Annamite Mountains about 95 miles to a junction with Communist Route 14 near the DMZ. Three construction plans were under discussion, and the road is slated for completion within a year. By avoiding low-lying areas susceptible to flooding, the road would ease logistic movements through the North Vietnamese Panhandle and by-pass portions of the recently up-graded Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos.

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COSVN Issues New Guidelines

25X1 22. [] the promulgation in late September of guidelines for a Communist "strategic raids campaign." This campaign involves an increase in the level and intensity of military activity in South Vietnam during the first several months of 1974, but stops short of calling for a general offensive. The object of the campaign is to force the government to establish a National Council of Reconciliation and Concord, which the Communists believe would form a government favorable to themselves.

23. According to the new guidelines, Communist combat units are to launch attacks in both lightly and densely populated areas to expand the territory under Viet Cong control. Targets presumably are to include South Vietnamese military bases, rear services depots, and lines of communication. In addition, the Communist infrastructure in rural areas is to be strengthened, and military proselyting activities are to be stepped up throughout South Vietnam.

24. The "strategic raids campaign" is in line with other recent evidence suggesting that near-term Communist military activity is to be of limited scope rather than a prelude to a major countrywide offensive. []

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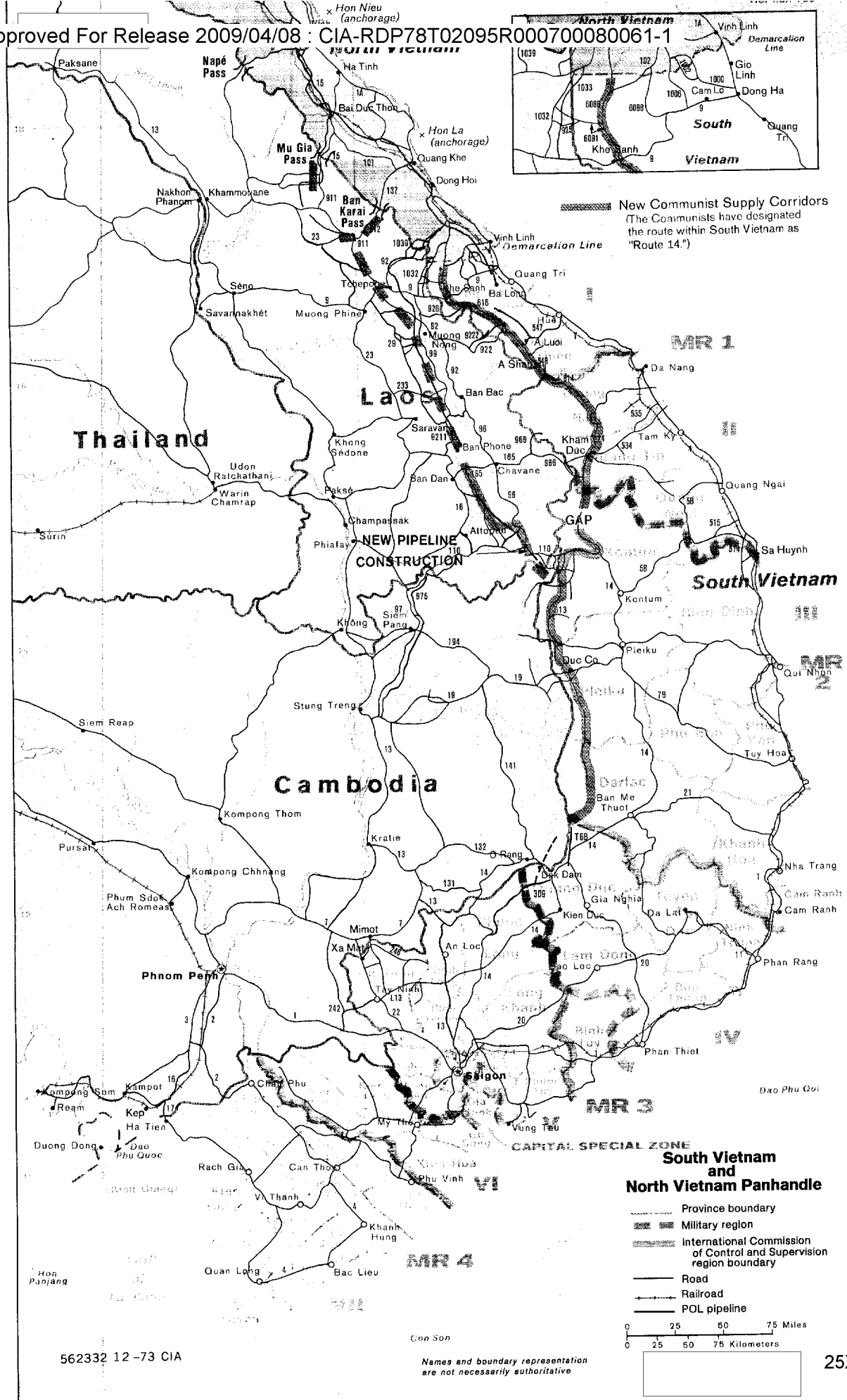
[] many COSVN cadre are even skeptical that the plan prescribed in the guidelines will be a success. More important, the cadre reportedly believe that Viet Cong and North Vietnamese combat units generally are not yet strong enough and that more time is needed to prepare them for the limited military activity which is scheduled to occur. In addition, the Viet Cong also face serious problems in obtaining sufficient rice supplies. This, along with the lack of a major conscription drive in North Vietnam and the low level of troop infiltration since September, suggests that Hanoi is not planning large-scale, prolonged military activity in the near future.

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Hanoi Continues Its Light Induction

25. North Vietnamese induction efforts apparently are continuing to move at a sluggish pace. The traditional winter callup is occurring in some areas, but judging from limited press coverage, collateral reports, and induction-related personal messages, December recruitment may be the lightest on record. For example, only seven personal messages were intercepted through 28 December, compared with between 51 and 59 messages in December 1970, the previous December low. In December 1972, the volume of personal messages -- at best only an indicator of gross induction trends -- totaled between 160 and 167.

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Names and boundary representation are not necessarily authoritative

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26. Following on the heels of a very light spring recruitment phase and an apparently abbreviated fall callup, the current campaign suggests that Hanoi feels neither a sense of urgency nor the need for a heavy injection of new manpower into its armed forces.

*Reported Communist Coastal Deliveries
to Southern South Vietnam*

27. During the first three weeks of December the Special Branch of South Vietnam's National Police seized six large fishing vessels and 30 members of a Communist transportation group which had been operating a sea resupply system for Communist troops in the Delta. [REDACTED] the group began operating in August 1972, and since then has made regular coastal deliveries of arms and munitions picked up from North Vietnamese supply vessels either off the coast of China's Hainan Island, or at the southern anchorages in North Vietnam and northern Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam. The ships used in transferring the supplies southward are all legally registered in South Vietnam.

28. In addition to the six already captured, police are searching for other ships which may have been used in supply runs, including two boats reportedly now en route from North Vietnam with another arms shipment.

[REDACTED]

29. This evidence indicates that the Communists may have been able to infiltrate a substantial amount of supplies into South Vietnam's Delta by sea over the past year and a half. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Communist units there are being resupplied with weapons and ammunition by sea. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the supplies originally come from China and are delivered to coastal MR 4 by fishing vessels which obtain the cargo from larger ships at sea. Although conclusive evidence has not been received, the high volume of fishing traffic and the control by the Communists of numerous enclaves along the coastline of MR 4 make detection of such activity extremely difficult.

ANNEX

INFILTRATION OF NORTH VIETNAMESE PERSONNEL
TO THE SOUTH

1. During the past two weeks, Group 3009, destined for the B-3 Front, and Groups 2036 through 2039, headed for the COSVN area, were detected in the Binh Tram 8 area near Vinh, North Vietnam. Group 2030, which had been included in our estimate previously as a "gap-filled" group, also was identified in a North Vietnamese intercept of 23 December. Moreover, 51 special-purpose groups with about 1,550 persons were detected moving south, 29 destined for the COSVN area, 14 for the B-3 Front, 3 for MR 5, and 5 for southern Laos. In addition, specially designated groups E132 and Z629 were detected in the Vinh area of North Vietnam and the central portion of the Laotian Panhandle on 31 and 25 December, respectively.

2. Since the 15 June "second cease-fire," more than 43,000 North Vietnamese have infiltrate southward, including some 39,000 combat troops and more than 4,000 specialists. Since the 27 January Paris Agreement, more than 93,000 personnel have infiltrated southward, including over 83,000 combat troops and about 10,000 specialists. Some 68,000 have started south since 27 January, while 25,000 were in the pipeline moving southward as of that date. The following table shows the number of North Vietnamese infiltrators starting south, by month and destination, since 1 January 1973.

Number of Troops Entering the Pipeline Destined
for South Vietnam, Southern Laos, and Cambodia
Since 1 January 1973¹

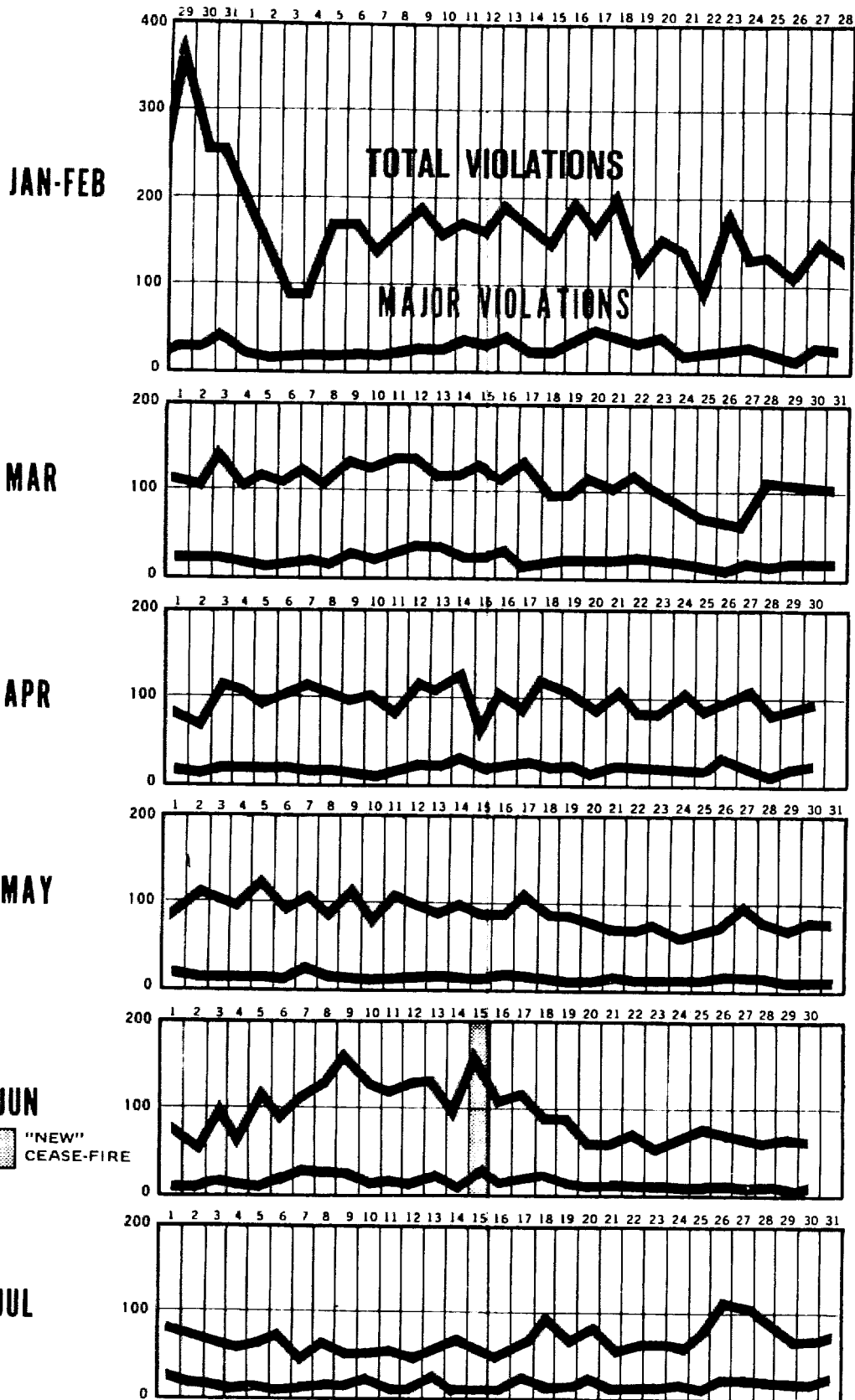
	COSVN	B-3 Front	MR 5	MR Tri-Thien-Hue	Southern Laos/ MR 559	Total
Total	18,000	7,500	9,000	14,000	26,500	75,000
Jan	7,000	5,000	4,000	2,500	....	18,500
Feb	5,000	500	....	1,500	1,000	8,000
Mar	....	....	....	1,000	....	1,000
Apr	1,000	....	....	....	....	1,000
May	....	....	....	7,000	....	7,000
Jun	....	....	....	....	1,500	1,500
Jul	....	....	3,000	....	....	3,000
Aug	....	....	....	....	1,500	1,500
Sep	....	....	2,000	2,000	3,000	7,000
Oct	....	....	....	....	14,000	14,000
Nov	1,000	1,000	....	....	5,500	7,500
Dec	3,500	1,000	....	....	....	4,500
Jan 1-2	500	....	....	....	....	500

1. Excludes special-purpose personnel. The totals are rounded to the nearest 500.



CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AS REPORTED BY RVNAF

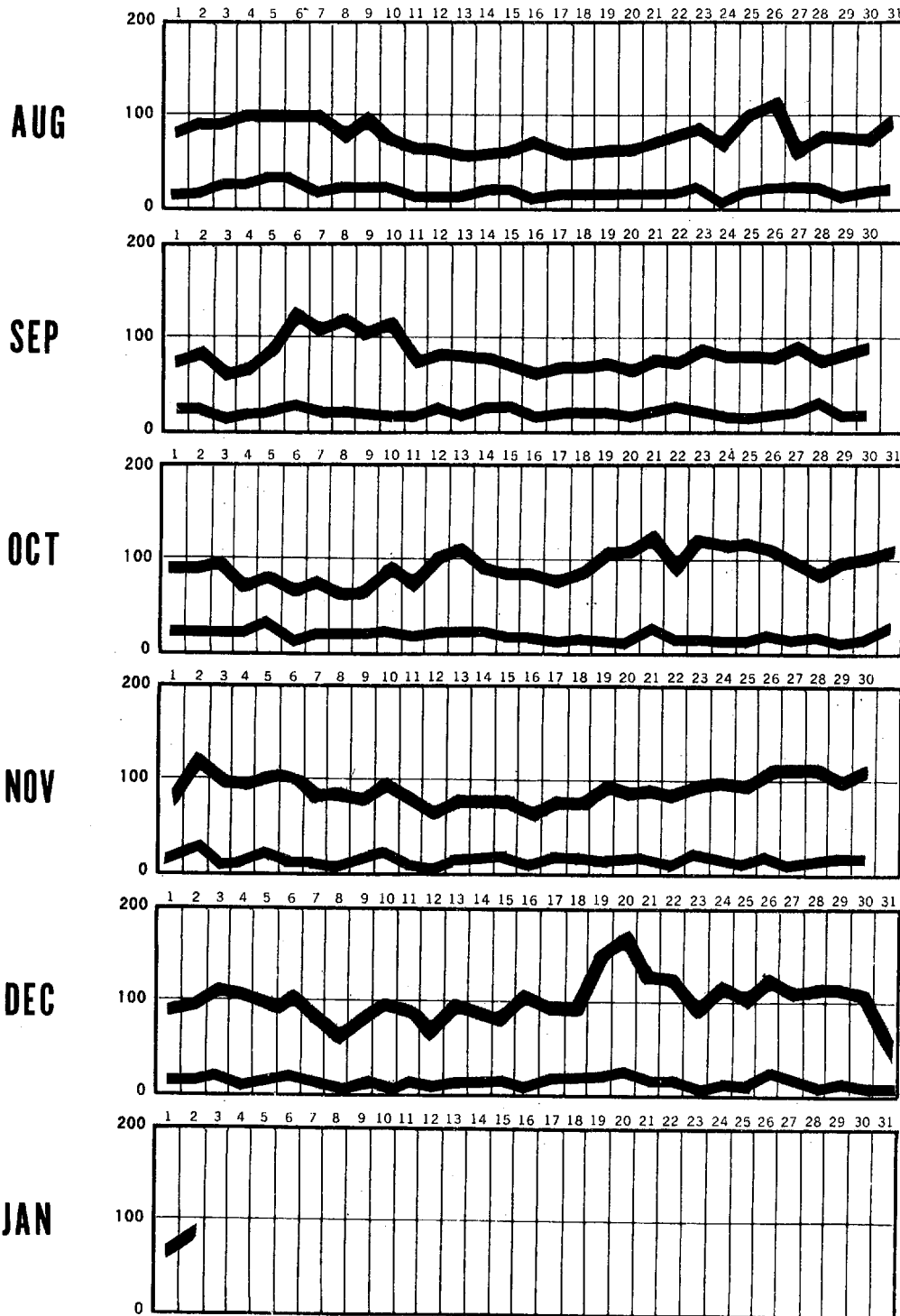
(28 JANUARY THROUGH 31 JULY 1973)





CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AS REPORTED BY RVNAF

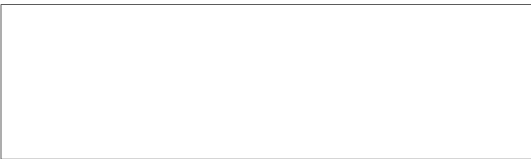
(1 AUGUST 1973 TO THE PRESENT)



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